

PREFACE

It is not uncommon for an author to write the preface to his own book. But the endeavour involves somewhat of a methodical paradox. What is written at the very beginning of the book and is reaching the eyes of those reading the first page first and the last one last, is commonly written towards the end, once it is clear where the journey on the pages to follow will lead. This most particularly applies to the preface for the last volume of a trilogy. After ten years of work, from my perspective as author, this preface introduces what remains of what I still have to say or write. I compose these lines aware of the content and reception of the first two volumes, as well as of all that is novel that I present here. I am writing it three years after starting to work on this volume. Chronologically, narrationally and argumentatively, this preface does not build on the end of the last, but the author's perspective in the following introduction does. I drafted it in Rishikesh in India three years ago and have not changed it since.

Even when written last, a preface is not a conclusion or an outlook. I am tempted to provide a sketch of where the work for this volume has carried me and where I further want to venture. It is not that I am having experiences and am passing them on, but that experiences are having me and are passing me on, one to another. Writing a book is not made up of merely one but rather many fascinating experiences. The paradoxical *ex post facto* presentiality of the retrospective nature of writing a "pre-face" is thus an inevitable one. Even though it is the correct

place for the author to express his gratitude for the experiences gained in writing, since through them he became who he is at the preliminary end, the echo of the writing experience of the author should nonetheless not inhibit the beginning of the audience's reading experience. One gestalt needs to be closed; the other needs to be opened. This book was born through coherence, encounter, stimulation, decision, selection, frustration and conflict; through trust fulfilled and disappointed; successful and unsuccessful communication; that which came to me and that which departed from me; through affection, affirmation, recognition and love, rejection, dissent, refusal, jealousy and betrayal. How thankful I am for all that has transpired me and has written this book!

During the last phase of writing, I watched a number of video recordings of conferences at the Mind and Life Institute, and became so thoroughly engaged with the topics involved that it almost appears to me as though I was present myself. I believe that from the perspective of transrational peace studies, the Mind and Life Institute has deepened what the founder's generation of humanistic psychology initiated when they gathered in the Californian Esalen or in the Indian Poona. It is symbolic that the Dalai Lama, Francisco Varela and Adam Engle started Mind and Life also in India, in Dharamsala, in the very days when Carl Rogers and Virginia Satir were dying. There is no causal relationship or reference. None of the distinguished participants used the term and yet, back in 1987, a new chapter of the natural and social sciences of the arts and humanities was opened, one that among all else points towards the methodology, systematics and didactics of transrational peace studies; in the continuing encounter between contemplative teachings of the East and the most recent state of affairs in so-called modern science that have taken place since that time. What I call transrational peaces is celebrated at the Mind and Life Institute at the highest level. A popular quote from Albert Einstein was and still remains an inspiration to the initiators:

A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.¹

Ruth Cohn, one of the iconic figures of humanistic psychology and thus of transrational peace philosophy, similarly describes humans as psycho-biological parts of the universe, autonomous and dependent to equal parts. The autonomy of individuals increases with their growing awareness of their interconnectedness with all and everything.²

Einstein's and Cohn's insights, along with many others, prefigured the renunciation of conceptions of human beings, the world, God and peace that, characterized by their individualism, were part of Cartesian modernism. The understanding of humans as integrated into the bigger picture of nature, the world, the universe, a notion entirely unamenable to modernity, is based on Einstein's "cosmic feeling". As António Damásio described it,³ it is in its own way exuberant, a mixture of heart-stopping awe and heart-beating-fast preparation for bodily communion with the world. This image also inspires the Innsbruck UNESCO Chair and programme in peace studies (UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). It enabled the now completed trilogy on transrational peaces and elicitive conflict transformation.

I personally became aware of Einstein's insight in all its beauty in a most unspectacular, yet deeply striking manner when in Santanyí, on the Spanish island of Majorca. As part of an extensive meditation, I was sitting by myself on top of a small cliff, high above the waves that were pulsating rhythmically against the rocks below. As the hours passed, the Mediterranean sun was accomplishing its task of reddening my skin. The wind was blowing salty air incessantly into my every pore. Fish were splashing about in the clear waters far below me. Thousands of mew-ing sea birds were not letting themselves be disturbed by the human intruder. At some point, my gaze became riveted on one of them which, following a breathtaking plummet, splashed into the water, only to disappear on the horizon a moment later, a thrashing fish in its claws.

What I had often seen and subsequently accepted as an unalterable law of life and allowing of death was in this moment demonstrating itself as sacred act. The bird is no perpetrator. The fish is no victim. All being, misinterpreted as individualistic, is an aspect of eternal transformation of the All-One. The bird is fishing; the fish is birding. The illusory Cartesian individuality of the bird, the fish, the sea, of each wave, each cliff, each creature, the characteristics of a perceiving self, dissolve in this unity, exposed before the elements. For a moment, I not only grasped Einstein's "whole called by us universe" in its conceptual manner, but I

was also a loving unity with it. This kind of experience lies at the heart of this book; it lies at the heart of the whole trilogy.

Einstein's universe in itself is neither cruel nor kind. As human beings, however, we are free to take up a subjective stance towards it. Although we are equal elements in the desultory, indifferent course of all things, by virtue of our human features we are not compelled to accept it unquestioned.

We are coming out of the world like leaves out of a tree, yet we remain autonomous and responsible for our own tinting and our own actions.⁴ This paradox, reflected in their concepts of peace, has engaged the world religions for thousands of years. Nature neither holds a strategy for fostering or destroying human well-being. Humans as beings of nature, however, are capable of devising such a strategy and search in order to adapt themselves to the apparent inevitability of the All-One. Suffering and seclusion can thus be alleviated as long as the subjective plan for peace is serving the common good of all beings.

Mahāyāna-Buddhism explores precisely this in its peace philosophy. Although we do not phrase it in this way in matters relating to the UNESCO Chair at Innsbruck, there is no contradiction to be found here. For in Buddhism the suffering in the world is a suffering of the human mind through its own deception. For UNESCO and hence also for my Chair, peaces need to be built in the minds of humans, as all suffering rooted in violence originates there. This leitmotif of the trilogy again gains momentum through the topic of this last volume.

Elicitive Conflict Mapping (ECM) is a tool and a method of peace work. This is the concern of this book. Tools and methods only find their paths of implementation and meaning in the minds of their users. ECM works with the impression that peace workers gain from conflict, what it means to us, how we interpret it, how we reconstruct and narrate it. For in our perceptions and our minds, the actual conflict is never to be found. Instead there is a version, a perceived, narrated and interpreted version. How does this sense of awareness work, and how do we manage to orient ourselves in a conflict reality that we cannot grasp as a whole in all its sensual, meaningful and complete characteristics? What does the limitation of this awareness mean for the work and organization of teams, constituting the normal state of affairs in peace work? How do our notions affect the realities of life for the involved parties, our clients? It seems appropriate for me to develop orientation aids to assist interaction with the minds of conflict workers. Why should the labyrinth that

is the human mind be less chaotic to navigate for peace workers than it is for other human beings? Are we to be considered more enlightened than the parties we work with? No one is born to carry out peace work because of his or her unique genetically based features; or better yet, everyone is. Everyone can systematically develop the necessary sense of a conscious perception. Before the turn of the millennium, Wolf Singer, at the time director of the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research at Frankfurt am Main, Germany, envisioned a culture of peaces:

where people do not just waffle and throw logical arguments to each other. Instead, somewhere where they can convey the concerns, the worries they hold and the people's embeddedness in their cultural environment in additional ways; by drawing, dancing or playing music to one another. I believe that significantly more could be conveyed this way, but most importantly that more relevant information could be passed on than through means of rational language use alone.⁵

The Strategic Capacity and Relationship Training specific to Innsbruck offers distinct preparation of peace workers for elicitive work, among many other activities. The UNESCO Chair developed ECM to be a practical tool. This and the writing of Volume 3 became possible through the participation of a wide range of people and institutions over the years. At the end of the trilogy, it appears fitting for me to thank those who have allowed this to be possible in a little more detail.

First and foremost, with regard to institutions, I would like to thank the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, the University of Innsbruck and the Grillhof Seminar Centre, an establishment of the Province of the Tyrol. The UNESCO Chair and its Master's programme have found and made their home within this triad. The unquestioned support of all three public institutions was and continues to be a decisive factor in the blossoming of the Innsbruck School, a globally renowned programme. In every one of these institutions, many have to play a part to ensure a functioning of the whole. Representative of all of them, I would like to particularly mention Franz Jenewein. In his position as director of the Grillhof Seminar Centre, he was at first an important supporter of the Master's programme and has since become an indispensable member for its board of directors. In an unwavering and sympathetic manner, he takes responsibility for the administrative functioning of the project and the well-being of students during difficult moments.

Others whom we initially regarded as local partners in the Tyrol gradually turned into integral components of the programme. Their continuous involvement in the fine tuning of the profile of the project makes all the difference. The Military Command of the Tyrol deserves to be mentioned first. It is not commonplace for cooperation between an academic programme in peace studies and a military establishment to take such a respectful, understanding and trusting course over this period of time. This success is thanks to the remarkable commitment many officers, commanded by Major General Herbert Bauer, have shown and continue to show towards the project. Major General Bauer is more than a vigorous supporter and *spiritus rector* of the programme. He is an intellectual with a remarkable vision for constructive opportunities for civil–military cooperation and a friendly, calming influence in times of troubled waters. Colonel Bernd Rott has developed a wide range of syllabi from year to year that are without equal on a global scale in their quality and depth. Every semester, he carries out the most extraordinary learning experiences for the students in unison with his tireless colleagues. Many of the aspects designed, trained and suggested by him have influenced and found a place in this book.

This can similarly be said to be true for the provincial firefighter school in Telfs and the fire brigade of the city of Innsbruck. The Tyrolean section of the Austrian Red Cross teaches students the basics of first aid in a manner relevant to field work. From the start of this cooperation, Gernot Grömer has relentlessly been ensuring the high standard of this training element in a most professional and charismatic way. In the frame of our curriculum, the aspect of a holistic experience of nature referred to above by Einstein is offered by Peter Kirschner and Hanna Raab in the International School of Life and Nature, Native Spirit. Such elements can only be advocated with these types of partners in the framework of an academic programme. I thank them all from the bottom of my heart for their contributions towards the unique development of the programme.

When speaking of friendship and trust, I envision those mentioned and all their associates. What would a programme be without its continuously growing “core faculty”, that core group binding it together conceptually and academically? Norbert Koppensteiner has been engaged in the project from the very first day, holding various key functions. What he accomplished through and for it cannot be put into words. Without him, the programme would be an entirely different one—and I would

be missing a truly great friend. Karin Michalek, Rebecca Gulowski and Sabrina Stein represent the organizational structure, but most importantly the kind of warmth and affection that enable students to endure the hardships of Strategic Capacity and Relationship Training in the first place. Josefina Echavarría magnanimously and conscientiously guarantees the academic advancement of the students and the continuous renewal of the programme through its contents and methods. Birgit Allerstorfer, Florencia Benitez-Schaefer, Shawn Bryant, Daniela Ingruber, Fabian Mayr, Jennifer Murphy and Andreas Oberprantacher have made sure for years that the students find their way into the semesters, where a great number of highly qualified lecturers await them. When I refer to Jennifer Murphy, Annette Weber, Isabelle Duquesne, Wolfgang Sützl, Sylvester Walch, Albrecht Mahr, John Kelly, Armin Staffler, Birgit Fritz and Winfried Wagner, I am naming several collaborators who have time and again made enormous contributions towards finding the particular in the normal and the playful in the earnestness of the programme. On the path that we have walked together, I have learned from all of them everything that has ultimately influenced this trilogy. In some way, they are all co-authors. I would like to thank all of them for every inspiration, particularly for the kind that I absorbed unnoticed in our encounters and quite possibly did not properly designate as such.

This, in the same manner, is true for Gerhard Oppl, who never spent a moment in the programme and yet in all these years has provided me with amicable and critical advice, continuously providing me with a sense of direction.

It is common courtesy to thank one's family in the preface to a book. In this particular case, it is a matter close to my heart to do so. Without my sons Chlodwig and Herbert, this book most likely would never have been completed, or would have become an entirely different one. We shared mystical moments. Their love and support are a lifelong inspiration and commitment to me.

What would an academic programme be without its students? It is not easy or simply a matter of course to embark on a programme borne by the kind of spirit and method I described in Volume 2. The Strategic Capacity and Relationship Training at Innsbruck in its academic, interpersonal, mental and physical challenges goes far beyond what Master programmes commonly demand and have to offer. To expose oneself to all of it requires courage, commitment, perseverance and a clear, conscious mind. Hundreds of students have passed through the programme

now. After all these years, their interest remains as unabated as the enthusiasm of those involved. This identifies elicitive conflict transformation as an attractive method that meets the minds and spirit of younger generations. By daring to embark on this adventure and by taking up strong challenges, the students provide meaning to our work. They give us the heart to keep on discovering new pastures.

Many of them by now organize themselves within the alumni network of the programme. What initially was thought of as a simple platform for mutual support between former students has gained considerable momentum. Alumni now get together as role players for modules of the programme and shape them following their own rich experiences, making them anew so that others can take and make them anew. They gather as practitioners in conflict zones, call for conferences, publish collected volumes together, organize workshops, discuss, dance, paint, play, transform and collectively live the spirit of the programme across the world. Could I have anything more beautiful to report?

I thank you all! The encounters with you have made me who I am.

I am delighted about every discussion that this volume and this trilogy prompt. There is no need for agreement with what I propose here. Its purpose will be served when it inspires thinking, testing out, disagreement, rejection or further development. In this sense, I hereby release my ideas, experiences, insights and inspirations for international peace work, and hope that they contribute towards making this world a little bit better for as many as possible.

Last but not least I thank Hannah Kuske and Jenny Murphy for accepting to translate this book from the German original into English. Over the years and decades, they say, I have established a dense and compact, yet flowery writing style, in other words, a nightmare for translators. Hannah and Jenny embarked consciously and enthusiastically on this translation, suffered heroically through it and created in the end a wonderful English text that reflects my original thought and aims perfectly. I am eternally grateful to them.

Innsbruck, Austria

Wolfgang, Dietrich

NOTES

1. Harris (29.5.2014) discussed in detail at the Mind and Life Institute (2003) and used frequently since.
2. Cohn/Farau (1984, p. 357).
3. Damásio (2003, p. 280).
4. Naranjo (2005, p.138). I elaborate further on this aspect in Chap. 2.
5. Singer (2002, p. 103), translated by HK. The content of the article, first published in 1998, in which he actually writes about a peace conference, can easily be transferred to the art and research of conflict transformation more generally.



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